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ONE DOLLAR

## Two strikes for Oregon LNG in Army Corps conflict

Judge rules company did not prove Corps abandoned site

By ERICK BENGEL  
The Daily Astorian

A federal magistrate judge has ruled against Oregon LNG in a dispute with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over whether the Army

Corps abandoned the property on Warrenton's Skipanon Peninsula where the energy company wants to build a liquefied natural gas facility. The decision, handed down by Magistrate Judge John V. Acosta before Christmas, states that Ore-

gon LNG did not present evidence showing the Corps "clearly and unequivocally" abandoned its interest in the property where the agency has held an easement to deposit dredging spoils since 1957. The lawsuit marked Oregon

LNG's second attempt to take control of the easement property, which covers land the company leased from the Port of Astoria.

Last summer, Acosta ruled in the Army Corps' favor after Oregon LNG claimed the Corps has no right to the land beneath the water where the company's proposed facility would be built.

The Army Corps moved to dismiss the company's claims, arguing that the 12-year statute of limitations to bring the claim under federal law had expired. The federal court agreed and dismissed Oregon LNG's lawsuit.

The company then tried to amend

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DECK THE CREEKS WITH BOUGHS OF JOLLY

Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Jenny Bell, a National Park Services biological technician, gestures to locations where Christmas trees and wreaths will be placed at the Colewort Creek restoration site at Lewis and Clark National Historical Park.

## Park Service effort puts Christmas trees to use for coho

By KYLE SPURR  
The Daily Astorian

Christmas trees can serve another purpose beyond keeping homes festive during the holiday season.

Lewis and Clark National Historical Park — inspired by similar efforts along the North Coast — is collecting old Christmas trees at its Colewort Creek restoration site to provide additional habitat for aquatic life, specifically juvenile coho salmon.

Trees will be collected until Jan. 16, when park staff and volunteers will host a work party to place the trees into the creek. The event, known as Cocoa and Coho, is in its third year.

The park collected about 30 trees the first year and 75 trees last year.

Jenny Bell, a biological technician at the park, said the Christmas trees create a huge benefit to the creek's ecosystem. Once the trees are put into the channels of the creek, within a few days the trees become covered in algae, which attract insects. The insects then attract the salmon.

"It's this whole ecosystem you end up getting from these trees," Bell said.

Colewort Creek's channels have become a juvenile rearing habitat. In the summer, Bell said, she sees young salmon, about 3 inches long, in the creek. It shows her the Christmas tree placement is working. Each tree is beneficial to the ecosystem for about five years.

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Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Jenny Bell, a National Park Services biological technician, stands near trees that have already been dropped off at the Colewort Creek restoration site at Lewis and Clark National Historical Park Monday.

**'It's this whole ecosystem you end up getting from these trees.'**

Jenny Bell

a biological technician at the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park

## Port settles with staff

Port of Astoria has one more active lawsuit remaining

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

The Port of Astoria is closing the book on cases brought by two fired employees in February.

Tammie Herman, the agency's former facilities manager fired in November 2014, accepted an offer of judgment earlier this month from the Port and Michael Weston, the former director of business development and operations.

Herman's acceptance of judgment brings to an end the legal quagmire the Port has been in nearly a year with members of its former finance department staff. Herman and Colleen Browne, the Port's former finance manager, were fired in November 2014 by Executive Director Jim Knight shortly after he took over. Both filed lawsuits in February claiming Weston, who was interim executive director between when Hank Bynaker resigned in September 2013 and when Knight was hired in October 2014, abused his authority in trying to become the permanent director. The lawsuits also alleged Herman and Browne were retaliated against by the Port after reporting Weston's indiscretions.

The judgment accepts all claims to be filed against the Port and Weston, named as a defendant in lawsuits brought by both Herman and Browne. Herman and her lawyer get \$255,000 in the offer of judgment, plus attorneys fees. Her lawyer, Anne Foster, applied for more time to calculate those fees.

Browne recently settled with the Port and Weston. She and her lawyer, also Foster, received a total of \$478,900 from the Port's insurer,

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## Writer believes Pacific Northwest has stories to tell

Entrepreneur makes a home in Gearhart

By KATHERINE LACAZE  
EO Media Group

GEARHART — Entrepreneur and writer Gideon For-mukwai was a bit uncertain when he moved from Singapore to Gearhart in late August, but over the months, he became intrigued by the stories to be told of sailors, shipwrecks, indigenous people and other local interests.

"I'm very fascinated by the



HIGHLIGHTING PEOPLE WHO ARE NEW TO THE COMMUNITY

Pacific Northwest," he said. "Cape Disappointment, the Graveyard of the Pacific — all these things are new to me, and they're very, very intriguing to me."

He moved to Clatsop County because of his wife, Dr. Pamela Soh, who works as a pharmacist at Providence Seaside Hospital.

For-mukwai, founder of Business Storytelling Acade-

my, is a native of Cameroon, Africa. From humble beginnings, he used the power of storytelling to plot a journey that took him to undergraduate school in South Africa, to Singapore for specialized studies, to Reno, Nevada, for a master's degree in new media journalism and then back to Singapore. For-mukwai has

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Katherine Lacaze/EO Media Group

Author Gideon For-mukwai moved to Seaside this year.

